

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A voice mail system (VMS) for communicating with a telephone switch to assist in displaying a VMS softkey template on a telephone display of a telephone, the telephone switch configured for transmitting a DR packet when an incoming call is received from the telephone, transmitting an AC packet containing an action code when an action is taken by a user of the telephone, receiving a DS packet containing a VMS softkey template number identifying a VMS softkey template, and displaying the VMS softkey template on the telephone display in accordance with the VMS softkey template number, the VMS comprising:

a processor programmed for

receiving the DR packet identifying the incoming call,

receiving the AC packet containing the action code of the action taken by the user, and

transmitting the DS packet containing the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template to be displayed.

2. The VMS as recited in claim 1, the VMS communications with the telephone switch occurring over a serial port.

3. The VMS as recited in claim 2, the processor further programmed for: receiving the DR packet, wherein the DR packet comprises information identifying a VMS port number assigned to the call, the type of telephone, and a voice mailbox assigned to the user;

receiving the AC packet, the AC packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call and the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template in use when the action was taken by the user; and

transmitting the DS packet, the DS packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call.

4. The VMS as recited in claim 3, the telephone switch further configured for receiving a DM packet containing a VMS literal string to be displayed on the telephone display and displaying the VMS literal string on the telephone display, the processor further programmed for transmitting the DM packet containing the VMS literal string to be displayed on the telephone display.

5. The VMS as recited in claim 4, the processor further programmed for transmitting the DM packet, the DM packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call and the voice mailbox assigned to the user.

6. The VMS as recited in claim 3, the telephone switch further configured for receiving a DD packet containing a VMS data template number identifying a VMS data template and displaying the VMS data template on the telephone display, the processor further programmed for transmitting the DD packet containing the VMS data template to be displayed on the telephone display.

7. The VMS as recited in claim 6, the processor further programmed for transmitting the DD packet, the DD packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call.

8. A voice mail system (VMS) for communicating with a telephone switch to assist in displaying one or more VMS softkey templates on a telephone display of a telephone, the telephone switch for displaying downloaded VMS softkey templates on the telephone display, the VMS comprising a processor programmed for downloading the one or more VMS softkey templates to the telephone switch upon startup of the VMS;

wherein every VMS softkey template download from the VMS to the telephone switch must include an SNMP manager request using an SNMP object identifier 1.3.6.1.4.1.186.1.22.3.3.

9. The VMS as recited in claim 8, the VMS for assisting in displaying one or more VMS data templates on the telephone display, the telephone switch for displaying downloaded VMS data templates on the telephone display, the processor further programmed for downloading the one or more VMS data templates to the telephone switch upon startup of the VMS.

10. The VMS as recited in claim 8, the VMS downloading of the one or more VMS softkey templates occurring over a network interface.

11. A system for displaying a voice mail system (VMS) softkey template on a telephone display of a telephone, comprising:

a telephone switch for transmitting a DR packet when an incoming call is received from the telephone, transmitting an AC packet containing an action code when an action is taken by a user of the telephone, receiving a DS packet containing a VMS softkey template number identifying the VMS softkey template, and displaying the VMS softkey template on the telephone display in accordance with the VMS softkey template number; and

a VMS communicatively coupled to the telephone switch, the VMS comprising a processor programmed for

receiving the DR packet identifying the incoming call,

receiving the AC packet containing the action code of the action taken by the user, and

transmitting the DS packet containing the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template to be displayed.

12. The system as recited in claim 1, the VMS communications with the telephone switch occurring over a serial port.

13. The system as recited in claim 12, the VMS processor further programmed for:

receiving the DR packet, wherein the DR packet comprises information identifying a VMS port number assigned to the call, the type of telephone, and a voice mailbox assigned to the user;

receiving the AC packet, the AC packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call and the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template in use when the action was taken by the user; and

transmitting the DS packet, the DS packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call.

14. A system for displaying one or more voice mail system (VMS) softkey templates on a telephone display of a telephone, comprising:

a telephone switch for displaying downloaded VMS softkey templates on the telephone display; and

a VMS communicatively coupled to the telephone switch, the VMS comprising a processor programmed for downloading the one or more VMS softkey templates to the telephone switch upon startup of the VMS.

15. The system as recited in claim 14, the VMS downloading of the one or more VMS softkey templates occurring over a network interface.

16. A method for communicating with a telephone switch to assist in displaying a VMS softkey template on a telephone display of a telephone, the telephone switch configured for transmitting a DR packet when an incoming call is received from the telephone, transmitting an AC packet containing an action code when an action is taken by a user of the telephone, receiving a DS packet containing a VMS softkey template number identifying a VMS softkey template, and displaying the VMS softkey template on the telephone display in accordance with the VMS softkey template number, the method comprising:

receiving the DR packet identifying the incoming call,
receiving the AC packet containing the action code of the action taken by

the user, and

transmitting the DS packet containing the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template to be displayed.

17. The method as recited in claim 16, the VMS communications with the telephone switch occurring over a serial port.

18. The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:
receiving the DR packet, wherein the DR packet comprises information identifying a VMS port number assigned to the call, the type of telephone, and a voice mailbox assigned to the user;

receiving the AC packet, the AC packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call and the VMS softkey template number of the VMS softkey template in use when the action was taken by the user; and

transmitting the DS packet, the DS packet further including information identifying the VMS port number assigned to the call.